



2015 SUMMARY REPORT

**The 69th Annual Meeting
of the Southern Legislative Conference**
Savannah, Georgia | July 18-22, 2015



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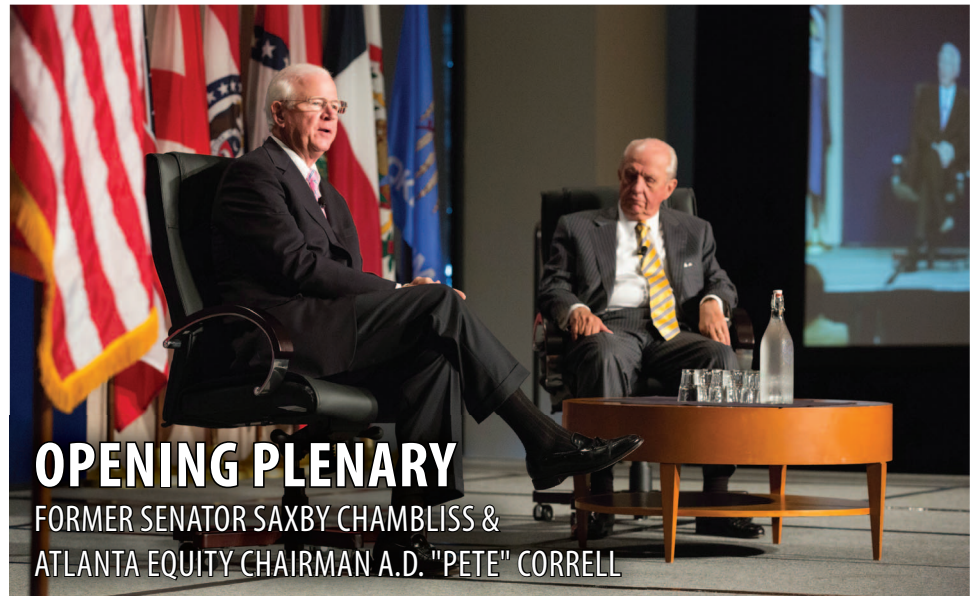
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During the 69th Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference, July 18-22, 2015, in Savannah, Georgia, legislators from across the South joined together with policy experts to discuss, review, and consider the opportunities that exist to bring prosperity and promise to states and communities in the region.

The meeting summaries in this report are condensed overviews of speaker presentations provided at sessions of the SLC standing committees. Presentations from committee sessions, where available, can be found on the SLC website at www.slcatlanta.org/GA2015.



WELCOMING ADDRESS
GOVERNOR NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA



OPENING PLENARY
FORMER SENATOR SAXBY CHAMBLISS &
ATLANTA EQUITY CHAIRMAN A.D. "PETE" CORRELL



CLOSING PLENARY
VINCE DOOLEY, FORMER UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
FOOTBALL COACH AND ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

SLC ANNUAL MEETING TAKES ON HUNGER IN THE SOUTH

According to the U.S. Census, Georgia is one of nine states exhibiting higher rates of household food insecurity than the national average. Additionally, one in four children are at-risk for hunger in southeastern Georgia. To help combat this problem, the Southern Legislative Conference held its fifth “SLC/Mark Norris Campaign Against Hunger” food packaging event. The service project has become a signature event of the SLC Annual Meeting.

With the help of the attendees of the SLC’s 69th Annual Meeting and volunteers from the Savannah metro area, 50,000 meals were packaged for food insecure families in the 21 coastal Georgia counties. The packaged meals were donated to America’s Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia, where they will be distributed to families in need.

Outreach Incorporated, SLC’s partner in this event, and America’s Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia received donations totaling \$5,000 from the SLC. Outreach Incorporated is an Iowa-based nonprofit with an enduring mission to provide food, water, medical care and education to millions of children in the United States and in East Africa.

Second Harvest food bank was established in Savannah in 1981. Their mission is to feed the hungry by distributing nutritious food to nonprofit agencies and at-risk elderly and youth, to assist in disaster relief, and work toward long-term solutions to end the cycle of poverty and hunger. Last year, America’s Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia provided more than 8.1 million meals to hungry people in coastal Georgia.



AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY



Representative Andy Anders
Louisiana
Chair

ATTRACTING NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS

With estimates projecting the world's population to reach 9.6 billion by 2050, the demand for food and agricultural products will continue to grow. Unfortunately, providers of those products are a class shrinking with age and the rising cost of doing business.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture found the number of farms is declining and the average age of farmers is rising. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the average age was 57.1 for principal farm operators and 54.9 for all farm operators, which also includes second and third operators. By 2012, the average age was 58.3 and 56.3 years old, respectively. During the same period, the number of beginning farmers dropped 20 percent, from 652,820 in 2007, to 522,058 in 2012.

In light of these trends, the USDA has implemented new policies and programs under the 2014 Farm Bill to help reduce the barriers to entry for beginning farmers and ranchers. Some of these initiatives include improving access to capital with the Farm Service Agency's Microloan program; increasing access to land by facilitating the transition of expiring conservation reserve lands from retiring owners and operators to beginning farmers and ranchers; and assist-

SUNDAY, JULY 19

ATTRACTING NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS

Senator Kent Leonhardt, West Virginia
Fred Harrison, Jr., Ph.D., State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency,
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Georgia

MONDAY, JULY 20

ADVANCING THE FOOD CHAIN: GEORGIA'S EFFORTS TO CONNECT PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS

Gary Black, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Agriculture

USE AND REGULATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS)

Senator Bret Allain, Louisiana
Mark Dombroff, Partner, Dentons, Virginia
Ben Worley, Chief Executive Officer, AgriSource Data, former Chief Operating
Officer, VSG-Unmanned, Georgia

ing in risk management through improved crop insurance coverage by reducing premiums during the first five years.

In 2014, the West Virginia Legislature created the Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Program to encourage veterans and returning warriors to become involved in agriculture and to support veterans already working in agriculture. In addition to increasing the number of agriculture entrepreneurs and assisting veterans in transitioning from the battlefield to home, the program provides agricultural therapy as a means of dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other traumatic brain injury issues. Reducing the barriers to entry, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture may lease land or space at state-owned facilities to veterans in the program. Lease-derived income is returned to the program for operations and other expenditures. Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members, and direct descendants of veterans are eligible to participate in the program. To date, more than 250 veterans have signed up to participate, and veterans have started more than 150 small businesses and cottage industries. The



program's most rewarding outcomes are the many accounts from veterans who credit the program with changing their lives and, in some cases, preventing contemplation of suicide.

ADVANCING THE FOOD CHAIN

Critical to the long-term sustainability of the agriculture industry, new farmers must have the knowledge and tools available to move their products from the farm to the consumer. Likewise, the estimated prevalence of food deserts increases the importance of consumers' access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Created by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the *Georgia Grown* program brings together producers, processors, suppliers, distributors, retailers, agritourism, and consumers to



ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Agriculture & Rural Development Committee elected Representative Tom McKee, Kentucky, to serve as the Committee's chair, and Senator Danny Verdin, South Carolina, to serve as the Committee's vice chair for 2015-2016.

build a statewide agricultural economy. *Georgia Grown* is a brand for Georgia's agricultural products, designed to help grow its citizens and local economies.

Current *Georgia Grown* initiatives include the Feed My School (FMS), Test Kitchen, and Executive Chefs programs. The FMS and Test Kitchen programs help bridge the gap between nutrition and quality of food in Georgia schools by challenging local communities to provide students with five days of meals containing at least 75 percent *Georgia Grown* products and providing school nutrition directors with nutritional test recipes, along with student opinions and information on obtaining locally-sourced ingredients. In conjunction with the Georgia Restaurant Association, the Executive Chefs program selects four chefs each year to serve as *Georgia Grown's* culinary ambassadors to help promote and foster relationships between chefs and Georgia farmers.

THE USE AND REGULATION OF UAS

In February 2015, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released its long-awaited Proposed Rules for

the use of commercial Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), or drones, without an FAA exemption. While awaiting release of the Final Rules, expected in 2017, the popularity of UAS continues to grow. Meanwhile, obtaining an FAA exemption remains the only legal means of operating commercial UAS. The Proposed Rules are less stringent than current exemption operating requirements. Combined with the country's delayed entry into the UAS industry, and the relative ease of obtaining the technology from online and other retailers, some industry experts believe this leniency signals the FAA's desire to avoid squelching a burgeoning industry. Unlike the exemption, which requires a pilot's license for UAS operation, the Proposed Rules create a new UAS operators certificate. Certified operators must be at least 17 years-old, proficient in English, and pass a TSA background check and Initial Aeronautical Knowledge Test, similar to the FAA pilot's exam. Applicants do not have to provide a medical certificate, pass a vision test, or demonstrate flight proficiency. Under the rules, all commercial UAS flights must be conducted where the operator can see the aircraft at all times. Although using a visual observer allows operators to fly outside the visual line of sight (VLOS), they must still be able to exercise aircraft control based on VLOS.

Recognizing the potential benefits of UAS technology, in 2014, the Louisiana Legislature established the Agriculture Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Study Group to study the use and application of drones for agricultural purposes and make legislative recommendations based on the findings. The Group found their value in agriculture could reach into the billions and could provide a new level of accountability and precision; however, it urged the FAA to consider regulating agricultural UAS separately from other UAS aircraft and to give states the authority to develop additional regulatory policies beyond the general FAA guidelines.

In 2015, the Group's recommendations were codified in Senate Bill 183. The proactive legislation provides state guidelines governing UAS use; authorizes UAS operation in accordance with regulations established by the commissioner of agriculture, except as prohibited by federal law; establishes safety and accountability measures; and provides for license and registration by the state Department of Agriculture & Forestry. Under the legislation, which authorizes civil penalties for violations, data obtained through UAS operation must be used solely in the course of conducting a generally accepted commercial agricultural operation or in conjunction with agricultural research, an extension program, or Louisiana university initiative. Regulations drafted by the Department of Agriculture & Forestry will become effective upon final disposition of the new FAA rules.

Using an FAA exemption, several companies are testing the uses and limits of UAS technology. Agriculture uses being tested include proactively using drones and data to help keep up with growing demands for agricultural outputs. By integrating drone data into agricultural decision-making, farmers can reduce costs and inputs, increase production, and promote sustainability.

Despite the potential benefits of UAS, the industry and the public maintain a number of concerns. Some of the biggest industry concerns are regulatory uncertainty, which includes a lack of discussion and coordination between states about their plans or future intentions; possible burdens of updating UAS technology; and a lack of industry standards. The most prevalent public concerns are privacy and security. As the country continues to build a regulatory framework for operating commercial and non-commercial UAS technology, it will be important for policymakers to take these and other concerns into consideration.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY



Senator Jeff Mullis
Georgia
Chair

TRANSPORTATION REFORMS IN THE SLC STATES

Like every other state, Georgia faces significant transportation funding challenges. In response, the Georgia General Assembly created a Joint Study Committee on Critical Transportation Infrastructure Funding in 2014 to identify the extent of the funding gap and strategies to overcome the funding challenges. The Committee concluded in its December 2014 report that between \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion in new annual transportation funding was needed, along with identifying 12 potential funding sources. The Georgia Department of Transportation also identified additional annual funding needs. Consequently, during the 2015 legislative session, the General Assembly, after intense debate and discussion, passed HB 170 that was signed into law by the governor in May 2015. The primary funding sources to address these fiscal challenges were:

- » **State Motor Fuel Excise Tax Rate:** 26 cents per gallon on gasoline; 29 cents per gallon on diesel; annually indexed for increased vehicle fuel efficiency and Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases;
- » **Hotel/Motel Nightly Fee:** \$5 per night lodging fee that excludes extended stay occupants;
- » **Heavy Vehicle Annual Impact Fee:** \$50 for vehicles between 15,500 pounds

and 26,000 pounds; \$100 for vehicles greater than 26,001 pounds; and

- » **Alternative Fuel Vehicle Fees and Tax Credits:** Institutes a \$200 non-commercial and \$300 commercial alternative fuel vehicle annual registration fee while eliminating the \$2,500/\$5,000 tax credit on low/zero emission vehicles.

Virginia is another state that initiated major transportation funding reforms in recent years. In 2013, after more than a decade of legislative efforts, the General Assembly adopted legislation providing a dynamic long-term transportation funding solution. This state-wide package was expected to generate about \$850 million annually when fully implemented from a combination of existing and new revenue sources, including \$200 million from existing general fund sources, by 2018.

Before the 2013 reforms, Virginia had pursued public private partnerships (P3s), tolls, agency reforms and the use of bonds to secure additional revenue sources. These reforms continued and, in 2014, the General Assembly enacted legislation requiring that the Commonwealth Transportation Board de-

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TRANSPORTATION REFORMS IN THE SLC STATES

Representative Bubber Epps, Georgia
Delegate Chris Jones, Virginia
Representative Larry Phillips, Texas

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: LESSONS FROM FLORIDA

Leon Corbett, Project Finance Manager, Department of Transportation, Florida

MONDAY, JULY 20

PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN EFFORTS

Page Siplon, Chief Executive Officer, TeamOne Logistics, Georgia

GEORGIA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Lee Thomas, Deputy Commissioner, Film, Music & Digital Entertainment, Department of Economic Development, Georgia



velop a quantitative process to prioritize transportation investments. In 2015, the reforms continued with the replacement of Virginia's transportation funding allocation formulae. Also, in 2015, the General Assembly adopted reforms related to improved evaluation of potential P3 programs.

Texas also is focused on continuing to develop and improve its transportation system. In the last few years, Texas' transportation policy decisions sought to increase the efficient and cost-effective movement of commerce, both within and outside the state. Texas also has sought to develop and expand all modes of transpor-



ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Economic Development, Transportation & Cultural Affairs Committee re-elected Senator Jeff Mullis, Georgia, to serve as the Committee's chair, and Representative Brent Yonts, Kentucky, to serve as the Committee's vice chair for 2015-2016.

tation to bolster the state economy and create jobs while maintaining and modernizing existing infrastructure. The passage of Proposition 1 (dedicating a portion of oil revenue to road construction and maintenance) provides at least \$1.5 billion annually, more than enough to fill the cash flow shortfall left by the expiration of two transportation bonds and resultant debt service. Another recent, important development involved ending diversions from the state's transportation fund for other purposes and reforming transportation procurement.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Florida has implemented two specific types of P3s for a number of years: Design-Build-Finance and Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain. Based on these two approaches, Florida has well over a dozen either completed or advancing construction projects totaling \$6.8 billion, including the Port of Miami tunnel project, I-595 project and I-4 project. Florida has continued to refine its P3 approach and, in 2012, the Legislature enacted, and the governor signed into law, additional controls.

Given Florida's extensive experience with P3s, the following surface as key lessons learned: treat each project as unique; structure deals comprehensively; compare delivery options and evaluate cost effectiveness early in the

process; secure government and community stakeholders' support; contract with outside experts with P3 experience while building internal expertise across projects; and ensure that the process is transparent and interactive. Working with concessionaires and federal partners, the Florida Department of Transportation has strived to deploy the P3 approach to deliver transportation infrastructure solutions in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN EFFORTS

While each company's supply chain needs are unique, they all are driven by the need to enhance reliability and deliver goods and services faster, cheaper and more efficiently. Concurrently, the entire supply chain sector faces tremendous degrees of change with new and emerging technologies sweeping across the landscape. In fact, projections point to the fact that between 2014 and 2019, remote payments will more than double (from \$42 billion to \$90 billion), with mobile payments expected to reach a staggering \$142 billion in the United States by 2019. Consequently, both financial and non-financial companies have enacted a range of measures to prepare for this wave of mobile payments.

Given the need for greater efficiencies in supply chain management, there has been heightened focus on enhancing physical infrastructure capacities across the United States. The failure of policymakers at every level of government to improve our phys-

ical infrastructure network has triggered billions in additional costs. On the human capital front, precise and customized workforce development programs are critical, primarily those targeting millennials, who, by 2020, will comprise 40 percent of the U.S. workforce. There also is a driver shortage, with the American Trucking Association estimating the need for another 100,000 drivers every year for the next 10 years.

GEORGIA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

Georgia's association with the motion picture industry dates back several decades. In 1972, the movie *Deliverance* was filmed in north Georgia and, in subsequent years, many other movies (from *Driving Miss Daisy* to *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* to *Glory*) were filmed in the state. A major transformation in Georgia's approach to the motion picture industry surfaced in the mid-2000s when the Georgia General Assembly passed the Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act, an initiative that provided a tax credit of 20 percent to 30 percent for movie production companies that spent in excess of \$500,000 in a fiscal year. This initiative has generated a tremendous amount of economic benefits to the state. A major component of this economic impact is driven by the location, relocation and expansion of the many companies related to the movie industry, particularly in the post-production arena. Dozens of companies continue to operate in Georgia to service the motion picture industry's activities, serving as the infrastructure backbone to the industry in the state. Since 2010, more than a dozen companies have located or expanded their studio facilities in Georgia. The motion picture industry's influence, both economic and non-economic, has been a real positive in Georgia, and state officials continue to work proactively to ensure that this trend continues.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY



Senator John Unger II
West Virginia
Chair

IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT ON EDUCATION POLICY

During the teenage years, there is an over-production of dendrites and synaptic connections, making learning easier and more efficient. This over-production occurs only twice in the human lifespan: once in early childhood and again during adolescence. Synaptic connections grow where adolescents spend their time. If they are reading, writing, or studying mathematics and science, they will grow dendrites associated with that information. The more one neuron fires with another neuron, the stronger the connection becomes and the more the knowledge is mastered.

The brain's "white matter" connects nerve signals so they can flow freely between different parts of the brain. In teenagers, the part that governs judgment is the last to be fully connected. Poor decision-making, an inability to envision consequences, and perceived invincibility put teenagers at risk. Addiction has been shown to be a learned behavior. The over-production of dendrites and synaptic connections causes adolescents to become addicted more quickly to cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. Given that teenage brain chemistry is tuned to be responsive to everything in its environment, if potent psychoactive drugs suddenly enter that envi-

ronment, those substances are tapping into a much more robust habit-forming capability.

Brain development and education are dynamic and interactive processes: while the brain impacts our ability to learn, our learning environment also shapes the brain. There are many implications of this interplay for educational neuroscience. Adults need to foster identity development and autonomy so that well-adjusted teenagers are a more likely outcome. The importance of service and multi-generational encounters for the teenager should not be underestimated, as it helps them gain perspective on their life and also builds self-esteem.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

First formed in 1988 as the Department of Technical and Adult Education, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) has three components: adult education, technical education, and economic development. This single statewide system consists of 22 colleges, 85 campuses and 33 College & Career Academies serving more than 244,000 students. The system offers lifelong learning, for middle school stu-

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IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT ON EDUCATION POLICY

Sheryl Feinstein, Ph.D., Dean, Department of Education, University of Nebraska
Laurie Cutting, Ph.D., Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Special Education, Psychology, Radiology, and Pediatrics; Principal Investigator, Education and Brain Sciences Research Lab, Vanderbilt University, Tennessee

MONDAY, JULY 20

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Gretchen Corbin, Commissioner, Technical College System of Georgia

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Elizabeth Gaines, Vice President, Policy Solutions, The Forum for Youth Investment, Washington, D.C.

Thomas Gold, Ph.D., Vice President, Research and Evaluation, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, New York



dents to retirees, with tuition waivers for seniors aged 62 and older. The average student is 28 years-old.

Using the annual tuition and fee cost methodology developed by the Southern Regional Education Board, TCSG students receiving HOPE Grants paid only \$1,170 for the year in the 2013-2014 academic year. During this period, 57 percent of students received a HOPE award.

When TCSG examined how to drive education in Georgia, three areas were identified: strategic industries in areas defined by the Governor's High-Demand Career Initiative; College & Career Academies; and the new Move



On When Ready program, which expands pathways for dual enrollment in the state.

Students who enroll in one of the 10 strategic industry program areas receive the Strategic Industry Workforce Development Grant and have no out-of-pocket cost for tuition. These grants were created in partnership with the Georgia Student Finance Commission and are designed to supplement HOPE awards. There are 141 strategic industry programs, identified as those with high demand for workers, and a high placement and wage rate.

The system's College & Career Academies (CCAs) are charged with preparing tomorrow's workforce through partnerships with TCSG, as well as local boards of education and business communities. These partnerships focus on local workforce development and emphasize preparing high school students for a 21st century workforce. Currently, Georgia's 33 CCAs serve more than 15,000 students.

Students find the challenging, hands-on programs relevant and valuable. College & Career Academies generally experience an increase in graduation rates—CCA students who are dual-enrolled typically have a 95 percent graduation rate—and an increase in student transitions. Academies around the state have demonstrated 98 percent placement rates straight into post-secondary

education and/or into a job after high school.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2008, after a decade of research, testing and refining a strategy to fundamentally alter the way their communities and states work with young people, The Forum for Youth Investment launched *Ready by 21*. This initiative focuses on a set of innovative strategies that help communities and states improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work and life. Working in partnership with government, business, education and nonprofits, they provide a framework, coaching and tools for leaders.

State funding for youth development can be a tangled web of services provided by numerous, often disconnected, entities. Concentrating these services into one pipeline of education, learning and engagement support, and basic services can provide a more efficient delivery system and have a greater collective impact. Further, state governments should consider focusing resources into youth development programs, encourage partnerships, and enhancing the collective impact of programs.

One component of youth development, the fostering of entrepreneurialism, has seen a decline in recent years. In 2014, for the first time in 30 years, the percentage of firms depart-

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Education Committee elected Senator Dolores Gresham, Tennessee, to serve as the Committee's chair, and Representative Tom Dickson, Georgia, to serve as the Committee's vice chair for 2015-2016.

ing the economy exceeded those entering it. There also is a talent shortage: 52 percent of employers report difficulty in finding the right talent.

Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing specific skills and knowledge related to business creation. These programs are common at the university level and growing in elementary and high schools. Middle and high school programs generally are taught in-person and online, led by certified teachers, and involve coaching or mentoring from local businesspeople. An experiential curriculum helps students learn through project-based, real world experiments. In addition, competitions can challenge students and reinforce knowledge. Volunteers may be used to coach students, judge competitions and support students and teachers.

States can play a role in developing and promoting youth entrepreneurship by developing clear entrepreneurial education standards. Current standards vary by state and often are couched within career and technical education or other tracks. Standards for entrepreneurship education should be elevated and offer a path to certification. Next, states can engage in rigorous research on the implementation and impact of entrepreneurship and other experiential programs; enhance education data systems to enable researchers to follow students from school to the workforce; support researcher-practitioner partnerships between districts and local universities; and identify opportunities to conduct experimental research studies.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY



Representative
William "Bill" E. Sandifer III
South Carolina
Chair

NET METERING

Energy policies in Southern states are undergoing substantial changes as installations of distributed generation systems, such as rooftop solar panels and other small-scale renewable energy technologies, continue to expand. This growth has been encouraged by state and federal tax credits, which have made renewable energy technology increasingly affordable. Further encouraging these installations is the availability of net metering programs, whereby customers who generate some of their own electricity are able to offset electricity bills by selling their excess power back to a utility provider. Of the 15 SLC states, 11 have statewide net metering policies.

Passed by the South Carolina General Assembly and signed into law by the governor in 2014, Senate Bill 1189 created the voluntary Distributed Energy Resources Program and ordered the state Public Service Commission to develop new net metering rules. During the rule-making process, the Office of Regulatory Staff facilitated dialogue among 17 stakeholder groups, including major corporations, investor-owned utilities, environmental groups and consumer advocates.

Net metering in South Carolina is limited to residential and nonresiden-

NET METERING

Representative William "Bill" E. Sandifer, South Carolina
Dukes Scott, Executive Director, Office of Regulatory Staff, South Carolina

NUCLEAR GENERATION IN SLC STATES

Michael McGarey, Senior Director, State and Local Affairs, Nuclear Energy Institute
Todd Yelverton, Commercial Director of Nuclear Development at Georgia Power, Southern Company

MONDAY, JULY 20

DROUGHT, WATER CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Representative Lyle Larson, Texas
Senator Eddie Fields, Oklahoma

BRIEFING FROM THE DOE

Karen Wayland, Ph.D., Deputy Director for State and Local Cooperation, Department of Energy, Washington, D.C.



tial customers with systems of 1,000 kW in capacity or less. Meanwhile, the utility provider is responsible for maintaining an account of total electricity produced and consumed. When more electricity is produced than consumed in a month, excess credits carry over to the next month. Electric utilities are required to compensate customer-generators for any excess electric production on an annual basis at the avoided cost rate. Notably, the law ensures that all consumers continue to contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the electrical grid.

NUCLEAR GENERATION IN SLC STATES

Nuclear energy is a proven and innovative technology, with more than 50 years of safe and reliable operation in the United States. Although initial licenses for nuclear reactors are typically issued for 60 years, reactors frequently exhibit strong performance well beyond 60 years. Nationwide, 78 reactors have received approval for a license extension, 17 reactors are under review for extension and eight reactors intend to apply for license renewal. As the nation moves to reduce carbon emissions,

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Energy & Environment Committee re-elected Representative William “Bill” E. Sandifer III, South Carolina, to serve as the Committee’s chair, and Representative Lynn Smith, Georgia, to serve as the Committee’s vice chair for 2015-2016.

nuclear energy facilities may become increasingly important in the stability of the U.S. power system as carbon-neutral baseload energy providers.

Southern states are leading a nuclear energy renaissance: currently, there are five nuclear energy units under construction in the United States and all five are located in Southern states. Watts Bar 2 in Tennessee is scheduled to become operational first, followed by Georgia’s Vogtle 3 & 4 and, finally, Summer 2 & 3 in South Carolina. When completed, the Vogtle fleet will be the largest nuclear energy facility in the United States. Collectively, the units are expected to power more than one million homes and businesses. Currently the largest job-producing project in the state, Vogtle 3 & 4 employs 5,500 workers and creates 800 permanent jobs when operation begins. The economic stimulation of nuclear energy facility construction extends beyond job creation and can result in the reduction of consumer power bills, making nuclear energy an attractive source of baseload energy.

DROUGHT, WATER CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Abundant water for drinking, sanitation, industry, irrigation, transportation and recreation has been a hallmark of the South. However, development pressure, changes in precipitation patterns, and transitioning priorities and consumption levels have caused a shift in the water supply. Water resource scarcity can affect many sectors of the economy as well as the region’s natural ecosystems. Periodic droughts, overconsumption, and other

factors can create water shortages. To offset or prevent water scarcity, many states in the South, such as Texas and Oklahoma, have adopted creative water management solutions.

In 2011, the majority of Texas experienced a D4 “exceptional drought.” This unprecedented drought prompted state leaders to enhance their water management and preparedness. Texas has 2.7 million acre-feet, or 880 trillion gallons of brackish groundwater under its surface, though it remains a largely untapped resource. To encourage greater utilization of this resource, House Bill 30, passed in 2015, requires the Texas Water Development Board to study and identify highly productive brackish zones. The state also is conserving its water resources by transitioning from surface reservoirs to underground reservoir storage. Transitioning to underground storage ensures the state is able to protect water in the reservoirs from evaporation. By developing access to brackish groundwater and transitioning to underground reservoir storage, the state will enhance its drought preparedness.

Like many states, Oklahoma has experienced many years of drought during the last decade. These drought events cause a decrease in precipitation, stream flows, soil moisture, an increase in fire risk and have profound consequences for agriculture, industry, tourism and recreation. To address these impacts, the state undertook an update to its comprehensive water management plan, Water for 2060. This update resulted in the recommendation of eight considerations for a more secure water future: conservation, reuse and recycling; infrastructure financing; monitoring; supply reliability; fish and recreation flows; a balancing of excess/surplus; state/tribal partnerships; and regional planning. In fiscal year 2014, the state made a supplemental appropriation of \$1.5 million for drought grants, focus-

ing on responsible water use and promoting greater water efficiency and drought resiliency. These grants were awarded to four communities and resulted in a savings of approximately 23 million gallons of water annually.

BRIEFING FROM THE DOE

Affordable, clean and secure energy and energy services are essential for improving U.S. economic productivity, enhancing the quality of life, preserving the environment, and protecting national security. To ensure the nation has the resources and infrastructure necessary to support an expanding economy, a Presidential Memorandum was issued on January 9, 2014, directing the administration to conduct a Quadrennial Energy Review (QER).

The first QER focuses on energy infrastructure and identifies the threats, risks, and opportunities for U.S. energy and climate security. The QER provides a 10-year roadmap that outlines federal energy policy objectives, legislative proposals to Congress, Executive actions, and financing and incentive programs. Some of the recently released recommendations include: establishing a \$2.5 billion - \$3.5 billion competitive financial assistance program to accelerate pipeline replacement and enhance maintenance programs for natural gas distribution systems; providing \$350 million - \$500 million to support updating and expansion of state energy assurance plans; creating a \$3 billion - \$3.5 billion competitive grant program to promote innovative solutions to energy infrastructure resilience, reliability and security; analyzing the policies, technical specifications, and logistical and program structures needed to mitigate the risks associated with loss of transformers; and assessing the need for additional or expanded regional product reserves. Continuing to monitor and improve America’s energy infrastructure can help ensure a prosperous national energy future.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL PLENARY SUMMARY

SUNDAY, JULY 19

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY: SLC STATE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE

Jackie Rohosky, Assistant Commissioner, Georgia Quick Start

J. Edward (Ted) Townsend III, Chief of Staff, Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee

John “Jay” Neely III, Vice President, Law and Public Affairs, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, Georgia

PRESIDING



Senator Roman Prezioso
West Virginia
*Chair, Fiscal Affairs & Government
Operations Committee*



PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

Georgia’s Quick Start program, the state’s workforce training program, has been rated the nation’s top ranked program by industry publications, site selection professionals and media outlets for the past 15 years. A division of the Technical College System of Georgia, Quick Start designs, develops and delivers customized, strategic workforce solutions—free of charge—to companies locating or expanding in the state. Quick Start relies on a unique, time-tested process that hinges on a fully integrated partnership with each client company to deliver customized workforce training programs aligned with the company’s schedule. Created in 1967, Quick Start has trained more than 1.1 million workers at nearly 6,700 projects in a wide range of industries including traditional manufacturing; advanced manufacturing; biomanufacturing; warehouse/distribution; customer service/customer contact; and headquarters operations.

Governor Bill Haslam and the state of Tennessee are focused on the fact that creating superior products, particu-

larly in the manufacturing arena, requires a highly trained, competent and motivated workforce. A steady pipeline of qualified candidates remains imperative for companies to thrive in Tennessee. To create the most conducive environment for this scenario, Governor Haslam initiated the *Drive to 55*, an initiative far beyond providing higher education opportunities; a mission encompassing workforce and economic development with the twin goals of reducing unemployment and improving quality of life. Another related measure involves an initiative led by Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, the TN LEAP (Labor Education Alignment Program), an effort to ensure that the state’s postsecondary institutions are producing the skills and credentials that Tennessee employers require.

Gulfstream is a leading manufacturer of the world’s most advanced business aircraft, headquartered in Savannah, Georgia, since 1967. Currently, Gulfstream manufactures eight different models, including the G650 ER, the

company’s top-of-the-line aircraft, priced at \$67 million. Gulfstream employs more than 16,500 people at 12 major locations on four continents, and there are about 2,400 Gulfstream jets in service around the world. Of the company’s total employees, more than 10,500 work at the Savannah location. In 2006 and 2010, Gulfstream injected nearly \$1 billion in capital to expand its Savannah location, creating an additional 5,000 new jobs.

A highly-trained and skilled workforce is a huge priority for Gulfstream, and the company collaborates closely with a number of key partners (Georgia QuickStart, technical colleges, universities, Georgia Department of Economic Development, elementary, middle and high schools, along with other companies) to achieve this objective. Gulfstream’s outreach programs to train high school students for possible employment in the company has resulted in more than 700 students working in apprenticeship programs at Gulfstream sites in Georgia and Wisconsin.

FISCAL AFFAIRS & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY

MONDAY, JULY 20

PUBLIC PENSION ENVIRONMENT: TRENDS FROM THE STATES

Senator Dan Biss, Illinois

Paula Sanford, Ph.D., Carl Vinson Institute, University of Georgia

HOW AND WHY DO THE RATINGS AGENCIES ARRIVE AT DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS?

Alan Schankel, Janney Montgomery Scott LLC, Pennsylvania



PUBLIC PENSION ENVIRONMENT: TRENDS FROM THE STATES

Beyond the issue of public pension challenges, a majority of American households face a retirement savings gap. For instance, 92 percent of working households fall short of retirement savings targets for their age and income based on retirement account assets; in addition, four out of five working households have retirement savings less than their current annual income. Another impediment to ensuring the retirement security of Americans is the fact that many workers, public and private, do not have access to a retirement plan. For instance, in Illinois, nearly 54 percent of private sector workers (some 2.5 million individuals), lacked access to an employment-based retirement plan. In response to this urgent need for an easily accessible retirement

plan, the Illinois Secure Choice Savings Program was enacted into law in January 2015. Consequently, starting in 2017, most state residents with jobs who don't already have a retirement plan at work automatically will be enrolled in individual retirement accounts, funded through a 3 percent deduction from their paychecks.

A review of the actuarial funded ratios of state and local government pension plans reveals a decline, from 95 percent in 2002, to 74 percent in 2014. While there is a great deal of variation among the states, the median funding status for all plans stood at 69 percent during the 2013 review period. In an effort to bolster the funding position of these public pension plans, experts recommend that state and local governments make their actuarially required contribution, or actuarially determined employer contri-

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Fiscal Affairs & Government Operations Committee re-elected Senator Roman Prezioso, West Virginia, to serve as the Committee's chair, and Senate President Pro Tempore Jonathan Dismang, Arkansas, to serve as the Committee's vice chair for 2015-2016.

bution, on a regular basis; adopt a consistent, long-term approach to investing; rely on realistic actuarial assumptions; regularly update demographic tables; and create partnerships between the legislative and executive branches to resolve pension issues.

HOW AND WHY DO THE RATINGS AGENCIES ARRIVE AT DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS?

The main rating agencies in the United States are Moody's (established in 1900 with 15,700 municipal issuer ratings), Standard & Poor's (established in 1860 with 16,500 municipal issuer ratings), Fitch (established in 1913 with 2,800 municipal issuer ratings) and relative newcomer, Kroll (established in 2010 with 100 municipal issuer ratings). An entity like Moody's structures its state rating framework by assigning equal weight to the state's economy, governance, debt/pensions, and additional weight to the state's financial strength represented by such criteria as diversity, volatility and growth in revenue alongside the state's fund balance as a percent of revenue, cash management and liquidity levels. While there are many similarities in how the agencies determine their ratings, there are subtle differences: for instance, Moody's places greater emphasis on debt and pensions while Standard & Poor's places heavier focus on institutional framework and management.

HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE SESSION SUMMARY



Representative Joni Jenkins
Kentucky
Chair

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM IN SLC STATES

Several studies have shown that the recidivism rate of juveniles placed in correctional facilities is no better than juveniles placed on probation. Additionally, low-level offenders who spent time in these facilities were more likely to re-offend after release than if they had received community-based treatment for the initial offense. Faced with rising costs and a growing body of research that shows extended placement in out-of-home facilities fails to produce the desired outcomes, and may even do more harm than good, many states are adopting alternatives to incarceration to reduce juvenile recidivism rates and to save money.

In 2012, the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians began an in-depth examination of the state's juvenile justice system. At that time, nearly two-thirds of Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice budget was directed toward out-of-home facilities. On average, the annual cost was more than \$91,000 per bed in secure residential facilities, and almost \$29,000 per juvenile in non-secure facilities. Moreover, the recidivism rates were 65 percent and 53 percent, respectively, within three years of release. Almost one-quarter of juveniles in residential facilities were adjudicated for misdemeanor or status offenses,

SUNDAY, JULY 19

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM IN THE SLC STATES

Ruth Rosenthal, Senior Associate, The PEW Charitable Trusts, Washington, D.C.
Honorable Steven C. Teske, Clayton County Juvenile Court, Georgia
Senator Whitney Westerfield, Kentucky

MEDICAID SERVICE DELIVERY: HEALTH HOME MODEL

Daniel Landon, Senior Vice President of Governmental Relations, Missouri Hospital Association
Michael S. Varadian, former Senior and National Director of Health Reform, Providence Service Corporation, Massachusetts
Tom Wroth, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Community Care of North Carolina

MONDAY, JULY 20

SPECIALTY COURTS IN THE SLC STATES

Honorable Junius P. Fulton III, Circuit Court of Norfolk, Virginia
Honorable Stephen Goss, Superior Court, Dougherty Circuit, Georgia
Honorable Amanda H. Mercier, Superior Court, Appalachian Circuit, Georgia



and low-level offenders accounted for more than half of non-secure residents. These findings, among others, drove Georgia's search for more successful alternatives to youth incarceration.

In 2013, the Georgia General Assembly passed a package of juvenile reforms, based on recommendations from the Council, which are expected to save nearly \$85 million through 2018 and avoid the need for two new juvenile residential facilities. Also in 2013, the Kentucky Task Force on the Unified Juvenile Code began an in-depth examination of the commonwealth's juvenile justice system. Similar to Georgia, more

than half of Kentucky's Department of Juvenile Justice budget was devoted to secure and non-secure residential facilities. Likewise, the Task Force discovered that 13 percent of juveniles confined in out-of-home placements were status offenders, and low-level offenders accounted for the majority of juveniles in secure detention facilities. In 2014, the General Assembly adopted a package of juvenile justice reforms projected to reduce the state's out-of-home placements by more than one-third and save \$24 million over five years.

The reforms passed in both states focus on advancing three key priorities. The

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Human Services & Public Safety Committee re-elected Representative Joni Jenkins, Kentucky, to serve as the Committee's chair, and Senator Doug Overbey, Tennessee, to serve as the Committee's vice chair for 2015-2016.

first is to reserve the most expensive resources for the most serious offenders. Both states now prohibit residential commitment for most status and low-level offenders and allow for the seriousness of the offense and risk of re-offending to be considered in sanction or diversion decisions. The second is to strengthen the use of evidence-based practices. Each state is providing financial incentives to local communities to expand their evidence-based programs and utilizing assessment instruments and other proven tools for better-informed decision-making. Finally, each state is committed to improving government performance and accountability with increased data collection and performance measures.

MEDICAID HEALTH HOME MODEL

As states across the country grapple with myriad Medicaid-related issues, some states have begun to explore alternative service delivery models to contain costs and reduce the prevalence of chronic conditions among Medicaid enrollees. One such alternative is the health home model, authorized under the federal Affordable Care Act, which targets individuals suffering from multiple chronic conditions by building on the coordinated care principles of patient-centered medical homes, while also integrating behavioral healthcare and long-term services. By March 2014, 27 health home programs were being implemented in 19 states.

Core health home services include comprehensive care management and coordination, health promotion, comprehensive transitional care, individual

and family support services, and referrals to community and social support services. Traditionally, 5 percent of non-elderly Medicaid patients account for half of Medicaid costs. Because these patients often suffer from multiple chronic and behavioral health conditions, providing better-managed care can help improve their health and reduce the cost of their care over time.

In 2011, Missouri became one of the first states to adopt the health home model. The state first identified the most costly "superutilizers" as those with medical costs above \$2,600 and two or more of the following conditions: diabetes, cardiovascular issues, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma, overweight, developmental disabilities, tobacco use, or serious mental illness. Then, the state began providing targeted managed care through behavioral health homes at community mental health centers (CMHC) and primary care health homes (PCHHs) at hospitals and federally qualified health centers. Initial funding for PCHHs came from redirecting an existing hospital provider tax. Through the first 18 months of implementation, the state estimates more than 20,000 CMHC enrollees and a total savings of \$15.7 million, with a \$76.33 per member per month (PMPM) savings. For PCHHs, the total savings are expected to be about \$7.4 million, with a \$30.79 PMPM savings, and 23,354 enrollees.

Unlike most states, North Carolina already had a strong statewide medical home program and infrastructure into which it was able to integrate the health home model in 2011. Community Care North Carolina (CCNC) comprises 1,800 medical homes across 14 regional networks. Each network has a medical team with a clinical and network director, pharmacist, psychiatrist, obstetrician, palliative care and chronic pain coordinators, and care managers who target individuals at risk for poor outcomes or high healthcare

utilization. Through informatics with analytics, reporting, clinical applications, and a shared care management platform, they use data to inform decisions and focus efforts. The state has seen a 20 percent reduction in hospital readmissions for patients in the transitional program; consistent reduction in PMPM spending trends as compared to those not enrolled in CCNC; and a savings of about \$184 million over five years, with higher savings for patients with multiple chronic conditions.

SPECIALTY COURTS IN SLC STATES

Since the nation's first drug court opened in 1989, a variety of problem-solving courts have emerged across the nation. With the establishment of courts focusing on mental health, drug abuse, homelessness, veterans, and a variety of other issues, states have embraced this alternative approach to reduce recidivism by addressing the underlying issues of new and repeat offenders. A significant percentage of "high-risk high-needs" individuals who come before a court suffer from concurrent substance abuse and mental health or behavioral disorders and, in most cases, one leads to the other. The targeted approach of specialty courts helps address these issues outside of confinement and helps states redirect their spending to reserve space in correctional and mental health facilities for those who need it most.

Successful specialty court programs not only require the complete commitment of the offender, but also the dedication of judges to move beyond the bench to act as more of a "social worker" for each defendant. While the prevalence of these programs has grown rapidly, outdated sentencing statutes and mandatory minimums can prevent judges from being able to divert some offenders who could benefit the most. As states continue to examine their criminal justice practices, specialty courts can be a powerful tool for rehabilitation, public safety, and fiscal savings when coupled with complementary policies.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF WORKSHOP SUMMARY



Marty Garrity
Director
Bureau of Legislative Research
Arkansas
Chair

PAPERLESS TECHNOLOGY IN SLC LEGISLATURES

States consistently are improving their use of technology to better serve constituents and to increase efficiency in the legislative process. Most SLC member states have converted one or more legislative activities, such as bill drafting and calendar distribution, to a paperless model. Doing so can save thousands of dollars through the reduction of paper use.

In most states, adoption has been incremental, with an emphasis on process revision. Although cost reduction is a priority for many, other incentives include efficiency, process improvement and enhanced user experience. When considering taking steps toward paperless systems, it is important to complete a thorough evaluation of business needs and processes; clearly identify goals and objectives; foster a climate of excitement around the transition; address fears and reservations directly; and be transparent in communicating the pros and cons of how the new software implementation will affect staff and members when transitioning to a paperless system. Best practices include understanding the users' needs; calculating anticipated costs; ensuring the new system integrates with the software

currently in use; evaluating information security; considering both desktop and mobile users; examining opportunities for cloud solutions; and evaluating a vendor's customer service offerings.

One initiative undertaken by an SLC state is the Tennessee Dashboard, a two-year project that transitioned schedules, calendars, amendments, staff analysis, legal analysis, fiscal notes and memos to a paperless model. With the clerk of the Senate leading the project, the director of Information Technology for Tennessee Legislative Services and an outside contractor created a seamless cross-platform application that provides secure, real-time updates to legislators on any smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer. Through an 89 percent reduction in labor hours and a 95 percent reduction in printing costs, the Tennessee Dashboard has produced a return on investment of 600 percent. The application emphasizes legislators' need to communicate, collaborate and execute laws at any time from any location. The Tennessee Dashboard model is available to any state that wishes to implement it, free of charge.

SATURDAY, JULY 18

PAPERLESS TECHNOLOGY IN SLC LEGISLATURES

Russell Humphrey, Chief Clerk of the Senate, Tennessee

Vinay Dattu, Director of Information Technology, Legislative Services, Tennessee

Dean Johnson, Chief Operating Officer, Georgia Technology Authority

THE SUPREME COURT AND THE STATES: BRIEFING FROM THE STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL CENTER

Lisa Soronen, Executive Director, State and Local Legal Center, Washington, D.C.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Elizabeth Kellar, President and CEO, Center for State and Local Government Excellence, Washington, D.C.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF GEORGIA

Todd Groce, Ph.D., President and CEO, Georgia Historical Society

THE SUPREME COURT AND THE STATES

The Supreme Court of the United States has been the source of much political and legal discussion during its 2014-2015 term, handing down a number of recent groundbreaking and controversial decisions, such as those pertaining to Medicaid reimbursement, same-sex marriage and antitrust laws. A review of these decisions shows that their impact extends beyond the litigants.

The 6-3 decision in *King v. Burwell* ruled that health insurance tax credits are available in the 34 states that have a Federal Exchange. The question in this case was whether a Federal Exchange is "an Exchange established by the state" that may, therefore, offer tax credits. The Court concluded that the above language is ambiguous, but by looking at it in the context of the entire statute the meaning of the language became clearer. Specifically, if tax credits were not available on Federal Exchanges, "it would destabilize the individual insurance market in any state with a Federal Exchange, and likely create the very 'death spirals' that Congress designed the Act to avoid."



In a 5-4 decision written by Justice Kennedy, the Supreme Court held, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry. The Court articulated four principles that demonstrate why the fundamental right to marry applies with equal force to same-sex couples. First, the right to choose who you marry is “inherent in the concept of individual autonomy.” Second, because the right to marry is “unlike any other in its importance” it should not be denied to any two-person union. Third, marriage between same-sex couples safeguards children and families just as it does for opposite-sex couples. Finally, marriage is a keystone of American social order from which no one should be excluded. With this ruling, the Court struck down the remaining bans on same-sex marriage in 13 states and reaffirmed federal court opinions doing so in 20 other states.

In *North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. FTC*, the Supreme Court held 6-3 that state immunity from antitrust law applies only if the majority of state board members are active market participants. After the North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners issued cease-and-desist letters to non-dentist teeth whitening service providers, the Federal Trade Commission charged it with violating federal antitrust law. According to the Court, non-sovereign entities controlled by active market participants receive state-action immunity only if the challenged restraint is clearly articulated in state policy and the policy is actively supervised by the state. Without active supervision, the Court reasoned, agencies, boards, and commissions made up of a majority of market participants may act in their own interest rather than the public interest. Here the parties assumed the clear ar-

ticipation requirement was met and agreed the Board wasn’t actively supervised by the state.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

As they endeavor to build the workforces essential to executing their missions, legislative directors recognize that they are competing with the private sector for talent and that they face significant challenges in attracting and retaining their best people. Research shows that people stay in a job or leave it for a range of reasons. Top performers want to be well compensated, of course, but they also seek other kinds of satisfaction, primarily related to their learning, growth and opportunities to make a positive difference.

Today, states have an older, more educated workforce. The average age of private sector employees is 39, whereas the average age of state and local government employees is 45. Traditionally, states have relied on recruitment tools such as wages, benefits, flexible practices, and the opportunity to serve the public and gain unique experiences. Attracting and retaining talent requires changes in recruitment practices, incentives for older workers, and staff development. With an aging workforce, it is important to practice succession planning and groom younger talent to transition into leadership roles. Ultimately, studies show that employees want intergenerational workplaces that offer cross-cutting assignments, outlets for environmental interests and speedier recruitment processes.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF GEORGIA

In many ways, Georgia’s history is integrally linked to that of the rest of the South. To acquaint participants with the state’s legacy, this session featured a presentation on the political history of Georgia, focusing on the last three centuries of the state’s history from its Colonial roots, to the height of the Plantation Era, through the sweeping changes of the Progressive Era.

COMMITTEE TECHNICAL TOURS

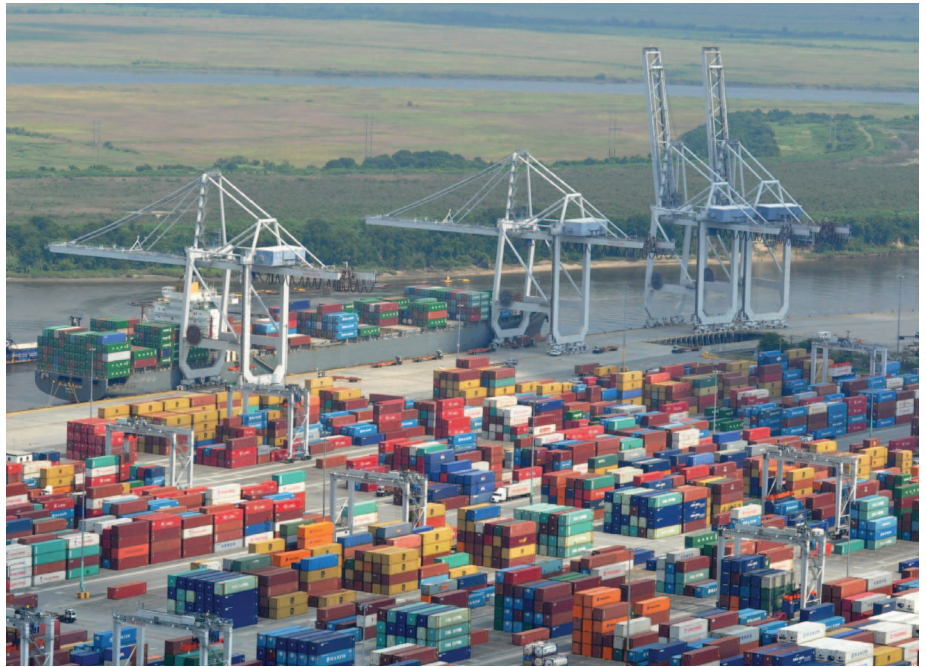
GULFSTREAM AND THE PORT OF SAVANNAH

Highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of policy making, three SLC Committees undertook a joint Technical Tour focusing on the connections between career and technical education, workforce development, economic expansion and environmental stewardship. Beginning with a briefing from the president of Savannah Technical College, participants learned about the College's Aviation Training Center, which provides Georgia's aviation industry with the highly skilled workforce required for aircraft design, assembly and maintenance operations, and represents a state effort to resolve the limited availability of workers with aviation-specific technical skills. Tour participants then visited Gulfstream's headquarters in Savannah and the Port of Savannah.

At Gulfstream, participants learned about the economic impact the company has on the region, construction of the company's latest aircraft (G650 ER), as well as steps Gulfstream has taken to improve fuel efficiency and reduce CO₂ emissions through their aircraft design. On the Port of Savannah tour, participants were briefed on the Port's economic impact on the state and national economy; impact of the expansion of the Panama Canal; infrastructure enhancements and multi-modal improvements at the Port; and environmental issues associated with the Savannah River deepening project.

HUNTER CATTLE COMPANY

More than a decade ago, Del and Debra Ferguson moved their family to Brooklet, Georgia, in search of a different way of life. Desiring more control over their own food and learning as they went, the Ferguson family began building fences and planting



grass to raise their own cattle. Much to their surprise, friends and family soon began to express interest in purchasing their grass-fed beef. Today, the family-owned and operated Hunter Cattle Company has grown from selling its beef at farmer's markets to processing and selling their award-winning products, which now include pastured pork, free-range chickens, and eggs, on site and throughout coastal Georgia. In addition, converted

tobacco lofts offer visitors a chance to experience farm living with an overnight stay and hands-on involvement in the daily chores of life on a farm. Guided by members of the Ferguson family on a tour of the farm, processing facilities, barn lofts, and general store, participants learned more about this family-run, *Georgia Grown* operation, including the rewards and challenges faced by many rural and small businesses.

STATE TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION RECOGNITION (STAR) JUDGES PANEL



Wayne Willcox, Chief of Police, Cyber Forensics Division, Armstrong State University, Georgia

CYBER FORENSICS DIVISION, ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY, GEORGIA

Cyber forensics labs retrieve deleted or corrupted data from digital devices such as computers, cell phones, tablets, and vehicle GPS. Due to the increased prevalence of cybercrime and digital evidence, however, most cyber forensic labs have backlogs of seven to 19 months, by which time criminal cases may be dismissed. In order to reduce this backlog, the Cyber Forensics Division at Armstrong State University opened its doors to state and federal law enforcement. All campus police are certified in digital forensics and, using the University's three Forensic Evidence Recovery Devices, Cellebrite machine, and digital forensics software, the police examine evidence during uncommitted time. Relating this work to the University mission, the campus police also train students in the criminal justice program through internships. Using the same laboratory



Linda Ford, Assistant Commissioner of Governmental Affairs, and Robin Sheldon, Deputy Director for Strategic Management Services, of the Vital Records Program of Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles

equipment, students learn how to retrieve digital evidence in a real-world setting through labwork modeled after actual cases. The Division has reduced Georgia's cyber forensics backlog from seven to 12 months to 30 days or less, and has achieved high placement rates for its interns post-graduation.

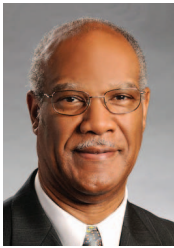
VITAL RECORDS AT DMV, VIRGINIA

In 2013, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation requiring a streamlined system for the retrieval of vital records by March 1, 2014. In response, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Department of Health (VDH) integrated systems, controls, policies and procedures, and developed a web portal to connect the DMV customer service application with the VDH vital records application. Prior to the implementation of the Vital Records at DMV program, residents and Virginia natives had to go to the Division of Vital Records in Richmond to obtain copies of certifi-

cates of birth, death, marriage and divorce, or contact the Division to have the records mailed. To make these records more accessible, the DMV and VDH collaborated to offer print copies at any of the DMV's 75 fixed locations and five mobile offices.

The availability of vital records at the DMV has been particularly useful to residents who need birth certificates required to obtain a driver's license or state-issued identification, as they may now access all necessary documentation in one place, at one time. The DMV reports that 93 percent of its vital records transactions have been successful. The program's use of the DMV's service footprint improves state services while also reducing DMV wait times. In addition, the program has proven transferable across agencies—the DMV has partnered to offer similar services for Department of Transportation E-ZPass and Department of Game and Inland Fisheries hunting licenses.

CONFERENCE NOTES



THOMAS B. MURPHY LONGEVITY OF SERVICE AWARD

Representative Calvin Smyre, business executive, state legislator, community and

national leader, began serving in the Georgia House of Representatives in 1975 as its youngest member at 26 years of age. As a 40-year legislative veteran and one of the “Deans,” he serves on the most important panels of the House. In the state’s budgetary process he serves on the Appropriations Committee, which is responsible for allocating the \$22 billion state budget. He also is a member of the powerful calendar-setting Rules Committee and former chairman of the House Minority Caucus.

Nationally, he was president of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators; a member of the Assembly on State Issues of the National Conference of State Legislatures; and serves on the Financial Services Roundtable. Representative Smyre has lectured at a number of colleges and universities and has received more than 200 local, state and national honors and awards. In 1985 and 2005, he was selected by his peers as the National “Legislator of the Year.” He has been honored twice as “Citizen of the Year” in his hometown of Columbus.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

The SLC continues to provide an array of services to its legislative members and staff by providing the opportunity to earn Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits for attending certified substantive sessions during the Annual Meeting. For more information regarding the annual meeting CLE accreditation, contact Lauren Greer at lgreer@csg.org, or the SLC office by calling (404) 633-1866.



CARTER/HELLARD LEGISLATIVE STAFF AWARD

The Carter/Hellard Award is presented to the individual who, in the judgment of the LSA Directors Group, has demonstrated excellence and dedication in staffing service to state legislators in the South. William “Bubba” Neely, Jr. of Mississippi was the recipient of the 2015 Award.

Bubba was employed by the Mississippi Senate Legislative Services Office in 1977, and the 2015 Regular Session was his 38th year as staff attorney for the Senate. During his tenure, he has become an expert in all legislation regarding state and local taxation and bonded indebtedness.

Bubba has a distinct talent for presenting legislative members with the facts associated with policy and other strategic decisions while also maintaining the integrity of the non-partisan nature of his service. Highly sought after for his fiscal expertise, Bubba has remained in the public sector due to his dedication to the legislative institution.

POLICY POSITIONS ADOPTED AT THE 69TH SLC ANNUAL MEETING

The Southern Legislative Conference adopted five policy positions at the 69th Annual Meeting:

1. Regarding Transportation of Freight by Rail
2. In Support of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
3. Regarding Updating Net Metering Policies
4. Regarding State Implementation Plans for the Proposed Clean Power Plan
5. Regarding the Retention of the Current Air Quality Standard

To review these policy positions and those of previous years, please visit www.slcatlanta.org/policy_positions/.

Policy Positions of the Southern Legislative Conference shall sunset the first day of the following Annual Meeting. The SLC collaborated with the CSG Washington, D.C. office to forward the positions to the proper authorities.

COMPARATIVE DATA REPORTS

Comparative Data Reports (CDRs) are prepared annually by select SLC states’ fiscal research departments. CDRs track a multitude of revenue sources and appropriations levels in Southern states and remain a useful tool to legislators and legislative staff alike in determining their respective state spending. The reports presented at the SLC Annual Meeting were:

- » Education - *Hank Hager*, Senate, West Virginia
- » Transportation - *John Snyder*, Legislative Research Commission, Kentucky
- » Medicaid - *Shawn Hotstream*, Legislative Fiscal Office, Louisiana
- » Corrections - *Matthew LaBruyere*, Legislative Fiscal Office, Louisiana
- » Revenue - *Andrea Barksdale*, Bureau of Legislative Research, Arkansas

Comparative Data Reports are prepared under the auspices of the Conference’s Fiscal Affairs & Government Operations Committee. Reports for 2015 and previous releases, dating back to 2000, are available through the SLC website at: www.slcatlanta.org/Publications/.

SPONSOR APPRECIATION

The Southern Legislative Conference extends special thanks to the following friends for their generous assistance with the general and substantive committee programs for our 69th Annual Meeting.

We are grateful for their continued support and interest in the Conference.

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IN-KIND

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69TH SLC ANNUAL MEETING STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

SLC STAFF

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LILY Schieber	<i>lschieber@csg.org</i>	Administrative Coordinator
NEIL Johnson	<i>njohnson@csg.org</i>	Operations Coordinator

SLC ADJUNCT STAFF

SUSAN Lanter	The Council of State Governments
JOAN Minton	Consultant

HOST STATE COMMITTEE

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	Senator Ben Watson	Representative Craig Gordon	Representative Ron Stephens

HOST STATE DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Kristy Lindstrom, Georgia House of Representatives

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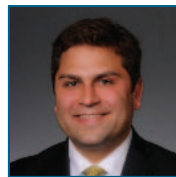


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